

**Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability
Confidentiality Policy**

Summary of Actions to Access and Obtain Confidential Information

In accessing confidential information, OPEGA will:

- Work with the responsible agency to determine what information is considered confidential or privileged;
- Submit a written request to the agency head describing the specific confidential information OPEGA will need to access;
- Obtain an understanding from the agency as to its specific confidentiality policies and procedures;
- Come to agreement with the agency on the specific confidentiality procedures to be used by OPEGA; and
- Commit that agreement to a written document signed by appropriate agency and OPEGA representatives, including the specific OPEGA analysts that will be accessing the information.

As a general rule, OPEGA will:

- Seek access to confidential information only when necessary to adequately answer the review questions posed or support a finding; and
- Limit the number of OPEGA staff reviewing confidential information to the minimum number necessary.

In protecting confidential information it obtains, OPEGA will:

- Treat all information obtained as confidential work papers under the OPEGA statute;
- Avoid, as much as possible, reviewing or obtaining information that would specifically identify an individual;
- Maintain information received on network drives, hard disk drives or in locked file cabinets accessible only to the OPEGA staff members that have been specifically assigned to work with that information;
- Take actions to keep any individually identifying information from being included in the official working papers;
- Lock all project working paper files in OPEGA file storage cabinets when not under the physical control of an OPEGA analyst or the OPEGA Director;
- Not remove any documents or electronic files containing confidential information obtained by OPEGA from the OPEGA office;
- Lock the OPEGA office whenever there is not at least one OPEGA staff member present;
- Destroy any electronic files or physical documents containing confidential information that are not part of the official working papers; and
- Mark project files that do contain confidential information, when they are stored/archived, to clearly identify that those files contain agency records that are designated confidential by law.